

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 157534
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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 157534

ROME FOR FODAGJOHANNESBURG FOR DEP ASS. SEC. C. FRANK

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: FAO, ECON, EAGR

SUBJECT: YOUR MEETING WITH FAO DG SAOUMA, JULY 11, 1977,
4:00 P.M.

FOR AMBASSADOR YOUNG

1. DIRECTOR-GENERAL EDOUARD SAOUMA (PRONOUNCED SOW-MA)
IS A FRENCH EDUCATED LEBANESE CHRISTIAN.
HIS BASIC TIES ARE
WITH THE LDC'S AND HE FREQUENTLY IS STRAINED TO ACCOMMODATE
MAJOR DONOR VIEWS. SAOUMA IS A CHARMING BUT EXTREMELY
SENSITIVE AND SUSPICIOUS PERSON, AND WAS DISAPPOINTED OVER
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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 157534

NOT SEEING THE PRESIDENT, THE SECRETARY AND YOU WHEN HE
VISITED THE UNITED STATES IN MARCH. SAOUMA WANTS TO MAKE
FAO MORE ACTION ORIENTED AND TAKES PERSONAL AFFRONT WITH
ANYONE WHO APPEARS TO OPPOSE HIM--EVEN INSTITUTIONALLY.
HE IS UNUSUALLY HARDWORKING AND DEDICATED BUT UNDERCUTS
THIS SOMEWHAT BY HIS FAILURE TO DELEGATE AND DEFINE
RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN HIS STAFF.

2. IN ADDITION TO RESTRUCTURING AND THE RIBICOFF EXERCISE ON WHICH YOU ARE BRIEFED, THERE ARE A FEW MATTERS SAOUMA COULD POSSIBLY RAISE. YOUR TALKING POINTS ON THESE ARE:

A. U.S. FAO RELATIONSHIP:

-- WE MUCH WELCOME THE OPENNESS WHICH HAS CHARACTERIZED FAO-U.S. DISCUSSIONS DURING YOUR TENURE. WE HAVE APPRECIATED YOUR VISITS TO WASHINGTON AND I REGRET WE WERE ABLE TO TALK ONLY BY TELEPHONE IN NEW YORK.

-- I AM HERE TO CONTINUE THIS CANDID DIALOGUE AND ASSURE YOU THAT WE WANT TO WORK WITH YOU IN MAKING FAO A STRONGER AND MORE EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION. YOUR JOB IS IMMENSE AND IMPROVED FOOD AND AGRICULTURE IS SO VITAL TO THE POOREST SEGMENTS OF MANY UN AND FAO COUNTRIES.

B. TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAM (TCP) IN FAO
(DOLLARS 20,000,000 1978/79):

-- THIS IS AN INCREASINGLY SENSITIVE PROBLEM WITH OUR CONGRESS AS INDICATED BY THE SENATE DECISION (REVERSED IN CONFERENCE) TO DROP TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE ASSESSED U.S. CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND UN. THE CONGRESS AND THE ADMINISTRATION BELIEVE
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PAGE 03 STATE 157534

THAT EXCEPT WHERE MANDATED HISTORICALLY AND CONSTITUTIONALLY THERE SHOULD BE ONLY ONE PRINCIPAL SOURCE FOR FUNDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (TA), I.E., THE UNDP, AND THAT SOURCE SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE FUNDED VOLUNTARILY.

-- WE BELIEVE CONCENTRATION ON UNDP WILL HELP ENSURE MORE EFFECTIVE PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING WITHIN RECIPIENT GOVERNMENTS.

-- WE RECOGNIZE THAT THE 1975 FINANCIAL CRISIS IN UNDP FORCED AGENCIES LIKE FAO TO PURSUE ALTERNATIVE METHODS FOR FUNDING, I.E., ESTABLISHING AN DOLLARS 18.5 MILLION TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAM WITHIN THE REGULAR ASSESSED BUDGET BUT WE BELIEVE THE UNDP FINANCIAL SITUATION HAS IMPROVED CONSIDERABLY.

-- AT THE SAME TIME WE SEE A NEED FOR FAO TO HAVE SOME LIMITED RESOURCES FOR USE IN EMERGENCIES AND FOR QUICK ACTION PROJECTS FOR WHICH RESOURCES ARE NOT OTHERWISE AVAILABLE AND FOR WHICH FAO HAS SPECIAL EXPERTISE.

-- THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR STILL INCREASED RESOURCES FOR FAO

THROUGH UNDP ARE GOOD--BUT CONGRESS HAS MADE IT CLEAR
WE CAN NOT HAVE IT BOTH WAYS. IF WE ARE TO MAINTAIN
SUPPORT FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES THROUGH
THE UNDP, WE CAN NOT ALSO SUPPORT EXPANDED TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE THROUGH ASSESSED BUDGETS. AND OVER THE NEAR
TERM, THE CONGRESS IS LIKELY TO RESIST STRONGLY INCREASES

IN THE ASSESSED BUDGETS USED FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.
THERE IS A BASIC RESEVOIR OF CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR
FAO BECAUSE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE,
AND THIS CAN BE STILL FURTHER DEVELOPED.

-- THE EVALUATION PROPOSED AT THE FAO COUNCIL MEETING
WILL BE CRITICAL RPT CRITICAL IN TERMS OF U.S. POLICY
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PAGE 04 STATE 157534

TOWARDS FAO (BOTH IN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH AND IN CONGRESS).
AN EVALUATION WHICH IS COMPREHENSIVE AND FULLY OBJECTIVE,
AND WHICH FULLY REFLECTS THE VIEWS NOT ONLY OF FAO BUT
OTHER CONCERNED MULTILATERAL AND BILATERAL AGENCIES
WOULD BE A STRONG TOOL WITH WHICH WE AND YOU COULD POINT
OUT THE POSITIVE MANAGEMENT STEPS FAO IS TAKING TO MAKE
AN EFFECTIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE OVERALL DEVELOPMENT
NEEDS OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

-- WE WILL CONTINUE TO INSIST ON PROPER UNDP REIMBURSEMENT
TO THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES FOR OVERHEAD COSTS AND DO ALL
WE CAN TO ENSURE THAT UNDP AND THE AGENCIES WORK TOGETHER
AS FULL PARTNERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS.

C. BUDGET LEVEL FOR 1978-79:

-- EVEN THOUGH THE PROPOSED INCREASE IS 23.8 PERCENT
(DOLLARS 206.8 MILLION AS OPPOSED TO DOLLARS 167 MILLION
FOR 1976-77), WE WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO SUPPORT THE
PROPOSED BUDGET LEVEL IF SATISFACTORY ARRANGEMENTS ON AN
OBJECTIVE TCP EVALUATION CAN BE MADE AND WE CAN FIND A
SOLUTION TO THE POST HARVEST LOSS FUNDING PROBLEM.

D. UN/FAO WORLD FOOD PROGRAM TARGET 1979-80:

-- WE THINK THE PROPOSED TARGET LEVEL OF DOLLARS 950
MILLION FOR 1970-80 HAS NOT BEEN JUSTIFIED AND, IN THE
ABSENCE OF SUBSTANTIAL OPEC OR EC INCREASES, PROBABLY IS
UNATTAINABLE.

-- WE ALSO QUESTION WHETHER THE ABSORPTIVE CAPACITY OF
THE RECIPIENT COUNTRIES AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CAPABILITY
OF THE PROGRAM COULD EFFECTIVELY USE RESOURCES OF THE
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PAGE 05 STATE 157534

PROPOSED MAGNITUDE.

-- WE LOOK WITH ANTICIPATION TO THE APPOINTMENT OF GARSON VOGEL (CANADA) AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND HOPE THERE WILL BE INCREASED EFFORTS TO USE WFP RESOURCES TO HELP MAXIMIZE THE RESULTS ACHIEVED FROM OTHER TYPES OF AID TO INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

E. DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL FAO:

-- I KNOW YOU AND BILL MAYNES HAVE ALREADY SPOKEN ABOUT A NUMBER OF PERSONNEL MATTERS IN FAO AND WFP. WITHOUT REPEATING WHAT MANY OF MY FORMER COLLEAGUES IN CONGRESS HAVE SAID ABOUT INTERNATIONAL PERSONNEL RECRUITMENT, LET ME SAY WE APPRECIATE THE EFFORTS YOU HAVE MADE TO PLACE A GREATER NUMBER OF AMERICANS IN CERTAIN POSITIONS IN FAO.

-- WE ARE PLEASED THAT YOU DESIRE TO RETAIN AN AMERICAN AS YOUR DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL, HAVE BEEN LOOKING INTO SOME POSSIBILITIES AND WILL BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS THESE WITH YOU AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME. VANCE

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